



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

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SINCE 1922

STATEMENT FOR URGENT ACTION REGARDING THE SALE OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 4, 2018, 1:45 p.m.— The Association on American Indian Affairs, the oldest non-profit organization advocating on behalf of Native Americans and Indian Tribes, calls for urgent action against yet another EVE Auction of Native American cultural heritage on Thursday, October 4, 2018 in Paris.

Without proper notice to Tribal Nations, EVE auction house placed thirty-eight Native American cultural objects for sale, including items from Acoma, Hopi, Navajo, Tlingit & Haida, Oglala Sioux and Zuni Tribes. The Association strongly reaffirms that the commercialization of Native American cultural heritage violates all Tribal and customary laws, and that the possession of human remains and their burial items, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony, outside of their original communities are the result of theft, looting and illegal trafficking. The commercialization of Native American cultural heritage as “art” or “antiquities” are in large part due to the reality that U.S. laws do not sufficiently protect Native American cultural heritage from commercial trafficking. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) only protects Native American cultural items that have been illegally trafficked from a museum who has received federal funds, or a federal agency, since November 16, 1990. Those same items are not protected outside of these limitations.

The Association on American Indian Affairs calls on all collectors and foreign institutions who hold Native American cultural heritage to inform affiliated Tribes immediately. Proper collaboration with Tribes can potentially provide appropriate provenance information needed to determine the identity of Native American cultural heritage. Without such documentation the sale and possession of any particular item may be highly questionable. The Association can assist collectors and foreign institutions to make those connections with affiliated Tribes.

The Association has learned that several international auctions of Native American cultural heritage will take place in November 2018. AAIA stands with Tribes and Tribal governments and is ready to assist them, collectors and other foreign institutions to appropriately identify and protect these items of cultural heritage.

As of 1:30 p.m. EST, the Association is aware that the Oglala Sioux Tribe asked EVE to pull one item from its auction so provenance could be investigated. At present, it appears Eve did not remove the item from the auction.

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966 Hungerford Drive, Suite 30-A Rockville, MD 20850 (240) 314-7155 General.AAIA@Indian-Affairs.org